

Message Text

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64

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 SAM-01 FEA-02 AGR-20

CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-03 INR-11

INT-08 L-03 LAB-06 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 AID-20

CIEP-03 SS-20 STR-08 TAR-02 TRSE-00 USIA-15 PRS-01

SP-03 OMB-01 SWF-02 DRC-01 /195 W

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R 041104Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5714

INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

US MISSION EC BRUSSELS 74

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, KS

SUBJECT: MUSHROOMS

REF:

A. STATE 191720

B. SEOUL 5262 (NOTAL)

C. STATE 170349 (NOTAL)

D. STATE 177801

E. SEOUL 5728 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: MOFA MAINTAINS IT UNABLE RESPOND TO REQUEST FOR AFFIRMATION WITH RESPECT OUTLOOK FOR CANNED MUSHROOM EXPORTS UNTIL REASSESSMENT INDUSTRY OUTLOOK COMPLETED. THIS SUPPOSEDLY WILL BE FINALIZED WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS AND MOFA HAS PROMISED TO DO UTMOST TO GIVE US RESPONSE BY NEXT WEEK. IF NOT FORTHCOMING BY THEN, WE PROPOSE INFORMING ROKG THAT WE ARE INTERPRETING ABSENCE OF RESPONSE AS NEGATIVE RESPONSE.

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WITH RESPECT EEC ACTION ON MUSHROOMS, MOFA HAS TOLD

US ROKG HAS LODGED STRONG PROTEST, BUT APPEARS TO BE MORE CONCERNED OVER UNILATERAL NATURE OF MEASURE THAN ANTICIPATED EFFECT ON KOREAN MUSHROOM EXPORTS.

END SUMMARY

2. REGARDING USG REQUEST FOR ROKG AFFIRMATION WITH RESPECT OUTLOOK OF CANNED MUSHROOM EXPORTS, EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMALLY PRESSING MOFA FOR RESPONSE FOR PAST SEVERAL WEEKS AS OPPORTUNITIES HAVE ARISEN. MOST RECENT DISCUSSION IN DETAIL TOOK PLACE AUGUST 30.

3. ACCORDING SUN JOUN YUNG, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (MAF) IN PROCESS OF REASSESSING OUTLOOK FOR MUSHROOM EXPORTS AND IS DRAWING UP NEW PLAN FOR INDUSTRY BASED ON THIS REASSESSMENT. ROKG UNABLE TAKE POSITION ON ITS EXPECTATION FOR INDUSTRY UNTIL THIS TASK COMPLETED. MAF HAS PROMISED MOFA TO HAVE STUDY FINALIZED WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS.

4. SUN SAID HE CANNOT SPECULATE NOW ON HOW DIFFICULT IT MIGHT BE FOR ROKG TO FURNISH AFFIRMATION UNTIL HE SEES RESULTS OF STUDY. HE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT MOFA IS HAVING SOME SECOND THOUGHTS ITSELF ABOUT IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A STATEMENT AND WAS DECIDEDLY MORE CAUTIOUS THAN HE HAD BEEN IN INITIAL DISCUSSIONS.

5. WE REITERATED POINTS MADE IN REF (C), STRESSING AGAIN THAT THERE IS STRONG INDUSTRY AND CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE FOR ACTION. SUN SAID HE RECOGNIZED THIS AND MAINTAINED THAT MOFA HAS BEEN URGING MAF TO CONCLUDE STUDY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

6. WITH RECEIPT REF (A), WE CONTACTED SUN AGAIN SEPT. 3 TO TELL HIM WE HAD RECEIVED CABLE EMPHASIZING VERY POINTS WE HAD MADE AUGUST 30. NOTING THAT BOTH HE AND MOFA ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFFAIRS, KIM, DONG WHIE, WILL BE GOING TO WASHINGTON FOR SEPT. 12 START OF U.S.-ROK BILATERAL TEXTILE CONSULTATIONS (SEE REF E), WE ASKED IF SPECIAL EFFORT COULD BE MADE TO RESOLVE THIS MATTER BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE. SUN REPLIED THAT DIRECTOR OF HIS BUREAU (CHOI, HO JOONG, DIRECTOR OF BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE) IS WELL BRIEFED ON THIS ISSUE AND HAS AUTHORITY TO ACT IN KIM'S ABSENCE.

HE PROMISED, HOWEVER, TO DO UTMOST TO GIVE US RESPONSE BEFORE HE AND KIM DEPART.

7. IN COURSE OF AUGUST 30 DISCUSSION, WE MADE SOME REFERENCES TO EEC AND SUN VOLUNTEERED INFORMATION RE EEC ACTION SETTING UP IMPORT LICENSING SYSTEM WITH EXCEPTIONS FOR COUNTRIES OBSERVING MINIMUM IMPORT PRICE AS DESCRIBED REF (D). HE SAID ROKG HAS LODGED STRONG PROTEST, BUT INDICATED THAT, WHILE ROKG HARDLY PLEASED WITH YET ANOTHER RESTRICTIVE TRADE MEASURE, WHAT UPSET ROKG MOST WAS UNILATERAL NATURE OF EEC ACTION. HE EXPLAINED THAT ROKG HAD ACCOMMODATED ITSELF TO SIMILAR PROVISIONS ESTABLISHED BY EEC IN PAST INVOLVING ACRYLIC YARN AND SOCKS OF MAN-MADE FIBERS. THOSE ACTIONS, HOWEVER, WERE TAKEN FOLLOWING BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. ACCORDING SUN, NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUP FROM EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION WILL BE GOING TO EUROPE SOON TO DISCUSS PRICE LEVELS. HE INFERRED THAT IF SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT ON PRICE LEVELS REACHED, EXEMPTING KOREAN EXPORTS FROM LICENSING REQUIREMENTS, ROKG WILL NOT BE OVERLY CONCERNED WITH MEASURE ITSELF.

8. IN ONE ADDITIONAL NOTE, SUN CLAIMED ROKG HAS LEARNED THAT MALAYSIAN MUSHROOM FACILITY MENTIONED PARA 3, REF (B), INVOLVES U.S. INVESTMENT, A POINT WHICH ROKG CAN BE EXPECTED RAISE IN ANY FUTURE DISCUSSIONS ON MUSHROOM ISSUE.

9. COMMENT: AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, ROKG QUITE CLEARLY DRAGGED ITS FEET LAST FALL WHEN USG WAS SEEKING BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. WE BELIEVE IN THIS INSTANCE ROKG IS GENUINELY MAKING EFFORT TO REASSESS OUTLOOK LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR MUSHROOM INDUSTRY AND DELAY IN FURNISHING RESPONSE TO THIS POINT HAS NOT BEEN UNREASONABLE. HOWEVER, IF WE HAVE NO RESPONSE BY TIME KIM AND SUN DEPART FOR WASHINGTON, ABOUT SEPT 9, WE PROPOSE TO GO BACK TO ROKG AND INFORM THEM THAT WE MUST INTERPRET ABSENCE OF RESPONSE AS INDICATING ROKG IS, IN FACT, UNWILLING PROVIDE AFFIRMATION REQUESTED AND THAT WE WILL REPORT ACCORDINGLY.

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